

California State Park Information

For information about State Park hours of operation, fees, annual passes or specific park regulations, you may contact your nearest State Park. Please check the front of your telephone directory under State Government, Department of Parks and Recreation.

For general State Park information, contact the Public Affairs Office at P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-6995.

For camping reservations call DESTINET at (800)444-7275.

For a catalog of State Park merchandise or for a listing of all State Park publications and videos, write to California State Parks Store, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001 or call (916)653-4000.



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

PETE WILSON
Governor

DOUGLAS P. WHEELER
Secretary for Resources

DONALD W. MURPHY
Director of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

Cover Photo by
State Park Volunteer Sandy Frediani

BOTHE-NAPA VALLEY STATE PARK

3801 St. Helena Highway North
Calistoga, California 94515
(707)942-4575

© 1996 California State Parks

3-96

37

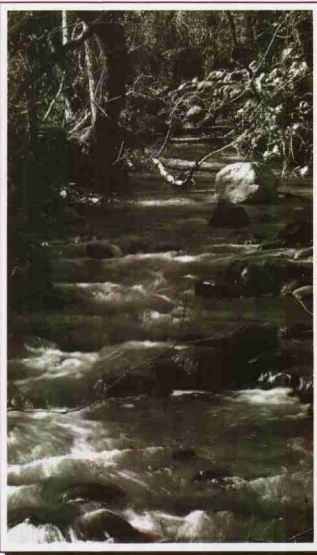


Recycled Paper

75¢

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park

& Robert Louis Stevenson State Park



CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

Bothe-Napa Valley State Park, located in the heart of the beautiful Napa Valley wine country, offers camping, picnicking, swimming, and hiking trails that go through stands of coast redwoods as well as forests of douglas-fir, tanoak, and madrone.

The park exhibits more seasonal changes than most Californians experience. Hot, dry summers change to mild, wet winters; in between, in spring and fall, the park and its surrounding area are probably at their finest. Summer temperatures may reach 105 F, but nights are usually cool. In the fall, when daytime temperatures are more pleasant, the leaves begin to turn, creating a dramatic and colorful display. Temperatures don't often go below freezing and snow is infrequent, but nearly 45 inches of rain are apt to fall during the winter - between December and March.

Most of the park is rugged, with elevations ranging from 300 to 2,000 feet. You will notice a pattern in the vegetation: the forests are on the north-facing slopes and in canyons, while south-facing slopes tend to be brushy; redwoods grow only near creeks or springs. Plant life hides much of the park's geology, which is principally volcanic, but you can see a reminder of the area's violent geologic past in the volcanic ash cliff of upper Ritchey Canyon.

The park is home to raccoons, gray squirrels, deer, foxes, bobcats, and coyotes, but they are hard to spot because of their nocturnal habits and the heavy forest cover. Usually all you will see is their tracks or scat. But you can always see birds - though there are not many species here, because of the limited variety of habitats. The forested canyon is home nevertheless to six kinds of woodpecker including the spectacular crow-sized pileated woodpecker and the rare spotted owl.

WHEN YOU VISIT

Interpretive programs are offered throughout the year, but most of the programs, including morning walks and evening campfires, are scheduled in the summer when children can learn about the environment by participating in the Junior Ranger Program. On most weekends, visitors can join the miller beside the water wheel at Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park to experience grinding grain just as it was done in the 1860s. Check park bulletin boards for precise scheduling information. Special programs can be arranged for groups. At the visitor center there are interpretive displays and publications on the area's history and wildlife.

Native American Plant Garden

The garden is located next to the Visitor Center. A guide to plants and their uses is available to broaden the visitors' understanding. This is a demonstration garden of some plant communities important to the first people of this area. Many of these plants are still used today by the Wappo people.

Picnicking

Picnicking is popular here. Most of the tables, barbecues, water faucets, and parking areas are located in the shade of huge maples and douglas-fir trees.

A covered area for use by groups of up to 60 people can be reserved by contacting the park. It contains picnic tables, a sink, and an electrical outlet. A wheelchair-accessible restroom is nearby. There is a horseshoe pit and areas for games, but no playground equipment or large open space for softball. The parking area can accommodate a limited number of busses.

Swimming Pool

The swimming pool, an unusual feature for a state park, is open daily from noon to 6 p.m. from mid-June through Labor Day. Both campers and day visitors must purchase a ticket to use the pool. Water for the pool comes from cool natural springs. There are dressing rooms and a shower. A lifeguard is on duty.

CAMPING

The park has fifty family campsites including nine walk-in sites that are suitable only for tent camping: one site is reserved for hikers and bicyclists. Only one vehicle is permitted for a walk-in campsite (no RVs or trailers). The remaining forty sites can accommodate tents or recreational vehicles (trailers up to 24 feet long, motorhomes up to 31 feet). One of these sites is fully wheelchair accessible. Campsite occupancy is limited to eight people, and an extra fee is charged for additional motor vehicles - two vehicles per site maximum.

Campsites have a table, cupboard and camp stove for wood or charcoal fires. Dead and down wood may not be gathered in state parks, but firewood can be purchased at the park. Water faucets are spaced along the camp roads. The two fully accessible

restroom buildings have laundry sinks, wastewater drains and drinking fountains as well as hot pay showers. There are no utility hookups.

A group campsite that can accommodate up to thirty people is located on the hillside above the picnic area. The facility is designed for tents and includes picnic tables, a large barbecue, fire ring and water faucet. The parking lot and restrooms are a short walk from the campsite. There are no showers or hot water.

Family campsites can be reserved from March 1 through October 31. Reservations are recommended for holidays, weekends and summer. The group camp can be reserved year round. Reservations can be made up to seven months in advance or as late as one day prior to arrival by calling DESTINET at 1-800-444-7275.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- * Bicyclists should be careful on narrow park roads as well as on the highways. The Silverado Trail bicycle lane is wider than that on Highway 29/128, but traffic on both roads is often fast and heavy.
- * Ticks, scorpions and rattlesnakes are all native inhabitants of this part of California. Like all park features, they are protected. Be sure to check for ticks after hiking in the park; Lyme Disease does occur in Napa County.
- * Dogs may be brought to the camping and picnic area, but are not allowed on the trails or in the pool area. Dogs must be kept on a leash no more than six feet in length and in your vehicle or tent at night. There is an extra fee for bringing your dog to the park.
- * All park features are protected. Help us enjoy the natural sights and sounds that have been preserved for your education and inspiration.

BOTHE-NAPA VALLEY STATE PARK
3801 St. Helena Highway North
Calistoga, California 94515
(707)942-4575

TRAILS

Whether you visit the back country on a hike of several hours or just stroll along the creek, you'll enjoy a closer look at the park's natural features.

RITCHIEY CANYON TRAIL (3.9 miles - first 1 1/2 m. easy, the rest moderate) takes you through the heart of the park on historic routes and paths and parallels a year-round stream shaded by redwoods, firs, and other plants that prefer cool, moist environments. At about 1 mile you will notice many trees and shrubs not native to this area as you pass through the Hitchcock site. The trail becomes steeper after a half mile but offering solitude and a pleasant picnic spot at the homestead site.

REDWOOD TRAIL (1.0 mile - easy) skirts the south side of Ritchey Creek. Along its upper section this path is heavily shaded by redwoods and mixed-evergreen forest. You will enjoy a peaceful walk along the creek bank among the ferns, soloman's seal and other shade-loving plants. Early in the spring, trillium and redwood orchids bloom at the base of the young redwoods that have sprouted from the roots of trees that were felled during settlement of the valley in the 1850s.

COYOTE PEAK TRAIL (1.5 miles - moderately strenuous) climbs out of the canyon bottom offering you views of the upper canyon and Napa Valley. Combining this trail with Ritchey Canyon, Redwood and South Fork Trails make a popular loop of 4.4 miles and reveals the variety of plant communities found in the park.

SOUTH FORK TRAIL (.9 mile - moderately strenuous) goes up a side canyon following a skid road used by early pioneers to haul out redwoods. After .4 mile the trail leaves the skid road and continues at an easier grade passing a spur trail to a good overlook of Ritchey Canyon before rejoining the Spring Trail.

HISTORY TRAIL (1.2 miles - moderately strenuous) leads from the picnic area to the historic Bale Grist Mill. Near its beginning the trail passes through a pioneer cemetery and the site of the first church of Napa County, built in 1853. It was named after the Reverend Asa White, who gave sermons in a grove of trees on this site. A steep section of the trail climbs from the cemetery onto a ridge paralleling Highway 29. The trail ends at the "Old Bale Mill" after passing the remains of the pond and ditches that brought water from Mill Creek to power the mill's overshot water wheel.

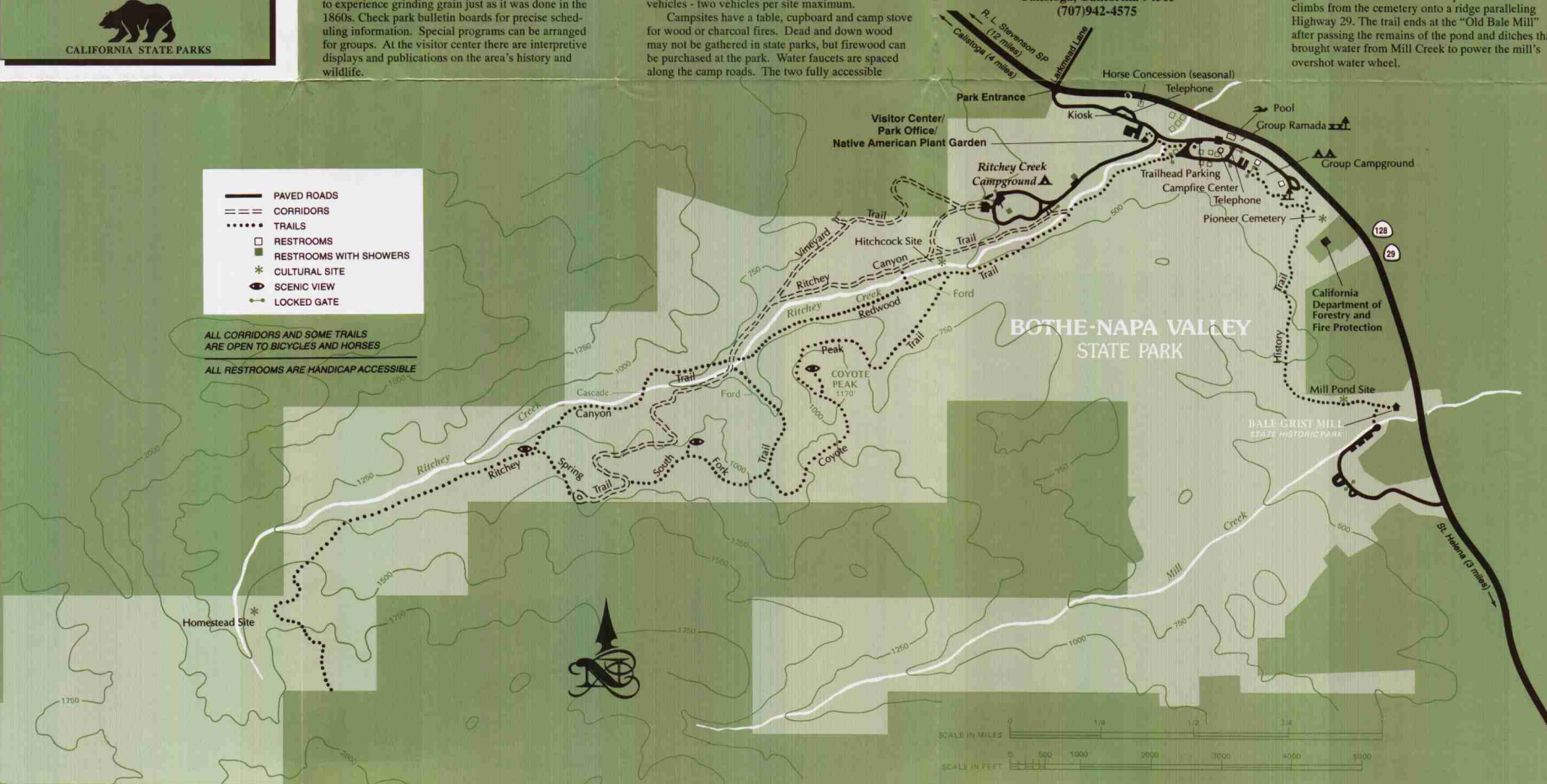


POISON OAK, a plant that is prevalent throughout the park, has an oily substance on its leaves and a juice that is highly irritating to the skin. Note carefully the shape of the leaves which turn from a shiny green in the spring to rich orange and red in the fall. You can best avoid contact with it by staying on the designated trails and in the regular camping/picnicking areas. If you or your children are not sure what poison oak looks like, ask a ranger to identify it so you can avoid it.

- PAVED ROADS
- CORRIDORS
- TRAILS
- RESTROOMS
- RESTROOMS WITH SHOWERS
- CULTURAL SITE
- SCENIC VIEW
- LOCKED GATE

ALL CORRIDORS AND SOME TRAILS
ARE OPEN TO BICYCLES AND HORSES

ALL RESTROOMS ARE HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE



HISTORY

For thousands of years the Napa Valley and its clear-running streams provided food and shelter to small bands of Native Americans. These family groups of Wappo people left only traces of their stone-age culture along streams such as Ritchey and Mill Creeks. Now protected by law, these tools and obsidian flakes remind us of the earliest human uses of this area.

These early people were followed by Spanish and Mexican soldiers and settlers, who were followed in turn by American immigrants to what was then the Mexican province of Alta California. Dr. Edward T. Bale was an Englishman who became a Mexican citizen and married a niece of Mariano Vallejo. During the early 1840s, he acquired an 18,000-acre Mexican land grant that included much of the land between Rutherford and Calistoga. Before the gold rush, many immigrants exchanged money or labor for parcels of Dr. Bale's land, and for the products of his two mills: a sawmill on the Napa River near the present Charles Krug Winery, and a grist mill in what is now Bale Grist Mill State Historic Park.

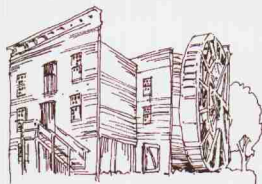
Dr. and Mrs. Charles M. Hitchcock acquired much of the present park as a country estate in the early 1870s. The Hitchcocks and their daughter, Lillie Hitchcock Coit, staged lively social gatherings that made the valley and its resorts a favorite vacation spot with San Francisco's elite. The Reverend Theodore B. Lyman, also bought acreage in the Mill Creek watershed including the Bale Mill itself and thereby helped preserve a sizeable example of the Napa Valley landscape.

The valley's attractiveness to vacationers led Reinhold Bothe to acquire part of the Hitchcock estate after Lillie Coit's death in 1929. The Hitchcock house, close beside Ritchey Creek, burned down after he acquired the property. For many years, Bothe operated a private campground resort known as Paradise Park. In 1960, the property became Bothe-Napa Valley State Park.

EXPLORE STATE PARKS NEARBY

BALE GRIST MILL STATE HISTORIC PARK is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and provides a look at a flour mill operation that dates back to before California's statehood. The "Old Bale Mill" was built in 1846 and has been restored to operating condition complete with its 36-foot wooden water-wheel and millstones. The mill is a mile-and-a-half south of Bothe-Napa Valley State Park on Highway 29/128. You can walk to the mill along the History Trail (see "Trails" section).

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON STATE PARK is open during the daylight hours and has a hiking trail leading to the top of Mount Saint Helena. Remember to bring your own drinking water for the long, sometimes hot climb up the mountain. The view from the summit includes the nearby geysers country and, when weather permits, distant mountains such as Lassen, Shasta and the Sierra Nevada. The largely undevel-



Bale Grist Mill

oped park retains the wilderness aspect that inspired some scenes in Treasure Island and became the setting of the Silverado Squatters, a story about Stevenson's stay here in 1880. The park is eleven miles north of Bothe-Napa Valley State Park on Highway 29.

Mt. St. Helena Trail (5.3 miles - moderately strenuous) starts the climb up the mountain about 300 feet west of the main parking area. The trail switches back and forth at a gentle grade through forest for 3/4 mile to reach a stone monument. *Please stay on the trail - hikers crossing the switchbacks have caused serious erosion and irreparable damage on this slope.* The monument marks the site where Stevenson spent his honeymoon in an abandoned mine building during the summer of 1880. From here you climb more steeply and leave the forest to intersect the fire road. After a short walk you can look down on the patchwork of the upper Napa Valley and beyond to Mt. Diablo and Mt. Tamalpais. Now you continue on the south-facing slope of the mountain surrounded by chaparral, both indicative of a hot place in the summer. The higher you go, the more exhilarating the view. At 3.6 miles a road branches to the left leading to South Peak in a half mile.

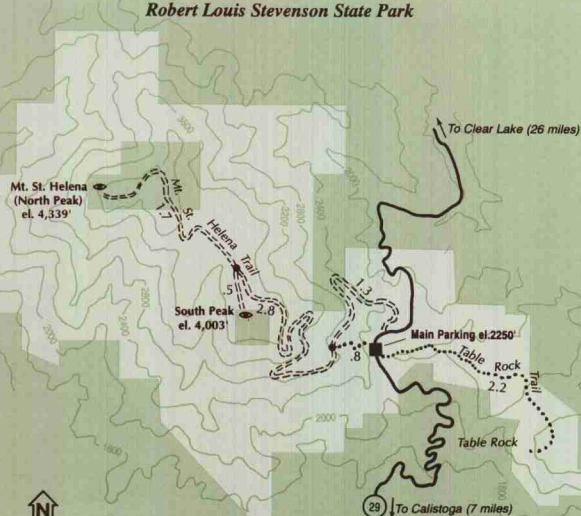
Table Rock Trail (about 2 miles - moderate) is a rough trail incorporating an abandoned utility road and a narrow path to access Table Rock, a recent addition to the park. The trail starts adjacent to the east side of the main parking area and goes east along a ridge. After about a mile the trail tops an intersecting ridge, and you are looking down on your destination. This trail provides some nice views, but the main attraction is the nearby scenery.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

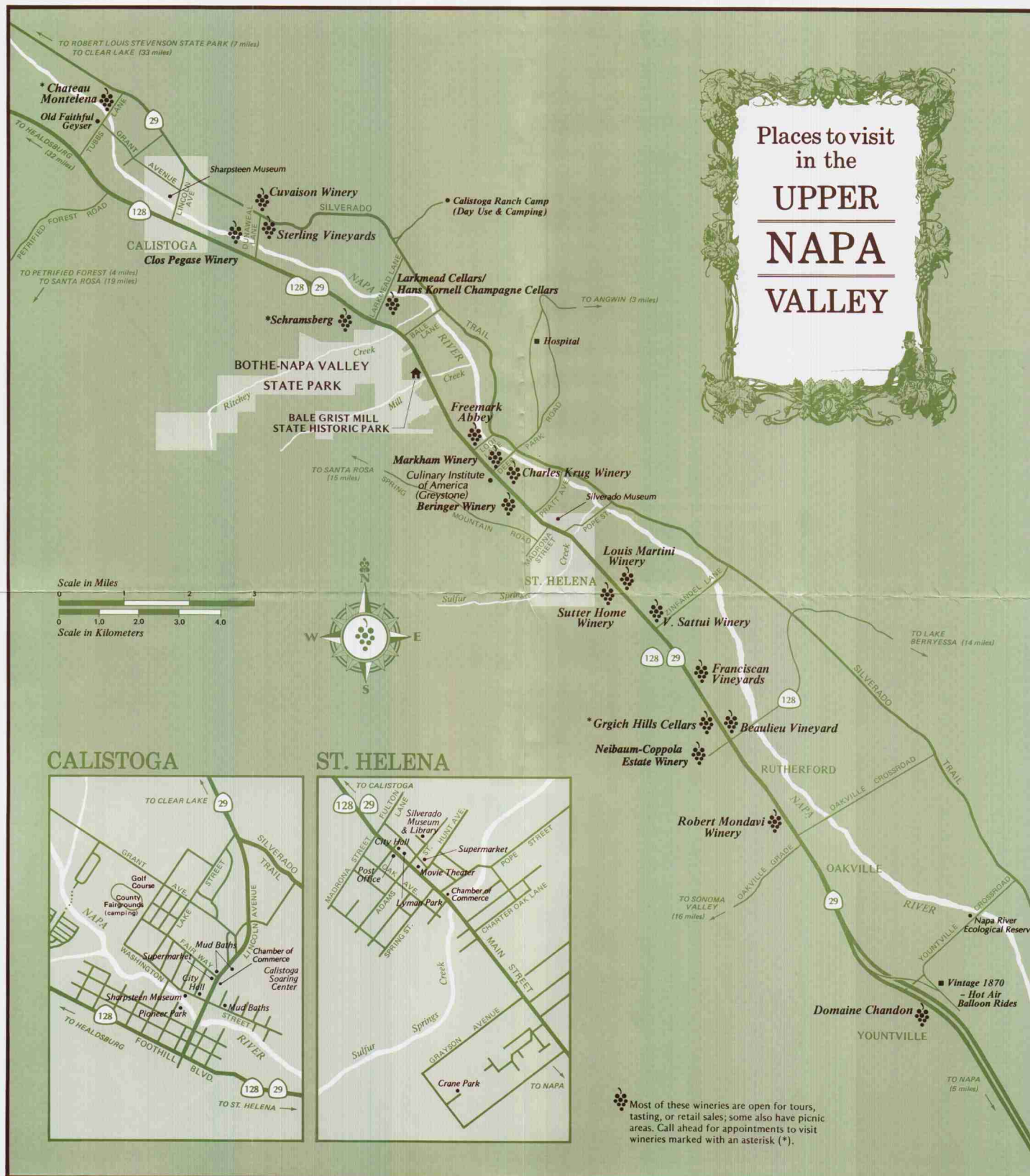
The wine country surrounding the park is full of sightseeing and recreational opportunities. Many visitors enjoy bicycling on the flat valley roads or visiting the wineries. Others thrill to glider rides or mud baths, both available in Calistoga.

Other nearby points of interest include the Petrified Forest (redwoods turned to stone); Old Faithful Geyser of California; the Silverado Museum in St. Helena (dedicated to Robert Louis Stevenson); and the Sharpsteen Museum with exhibits about early Calistoga history.

Robert Louis Stevenson State Park



Park is open from sunrise to sunset ONLY.



Most of these wineries are open for tours, tasting, or retail sales; some also have picnic areas. Call ahead for appointments to visit wineries marked with an asterisk (*).